

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 2476

SPONSOR: Senator Argenziano

SUBJECT: Inmate Transition Course

DATE: April 3, 2003

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Clodfelter</u>	<u>Cannon</u>	<u>CJ</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>JU</u>	<u> </u>
3.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
4.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
5.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
6.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

I. Summary:

This bill amends s. 944.7065, F.S., to modify the requirements for the Department of Corrections' transition course covering job readiness and life management skills. The bill requires that the course be completed by inmates who meet criteria established by the department, rather than by all inmates being released from incarceration. It also removes the specific requirement that the course be 100 hours in length.

The bill provides that it will take effect upon becoming a law.

This bill substantially amends, creates, or repeals the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 944.7065.

II. Present Situation:

Pursuant to s. 944.7065, F.S., all inmates who are released from incarceration by the Department of Corrections must complete a 100-hour transition course that includes instruction in job readiness and life management skills. However, the department indicates that it has been unable to accomplish the statutory requirement with the resources that it has available. The department has also noted that some of the instruction included in the 100-hour course is more appropriately accomplished by a correctional institution's Transition Assistance Specialist, and that there is in fact duplication of effort in many areas.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 944.7065, F.S., to delete the specific requirement that the comprehensive transition course be 100 hours in length. This will allow the department to reduce the length of the course. According to the department, reduction of the length of the course will enable it to

reduce unproductive overlap of course content with the efforts of Transition Assistance Specialists. The bill does not specify a minimum length for the transition course.

Section 944.7065, F.S., is also amended to remove the requirement that all inmates complete the transition course prior to release. In practice, not all inmates are currently receiving the required instruction. The bill would still require completion of the transition course by those inmates who meet department criteria for taking the course, but the parameters of the eligibility criteria are not set forth in the statute. The department asserts that allowing it to establish eligibility criteria, rather than mandating completion of the transition course for all inmates being released, will create flexibility for it to use existing resources to provide the course to inmates for whom it will be the most beneficial. According to the department, inmates who might be excluded by the criteria include those who are being released to a detainer, those who are unable to attend due to medical or mental conditions as verified by medical personnel, and those who are not incarcerated long enough to complete the course.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The financial impact on the private sector cannot be determined. The bill could result in fewer inmates reentering society with marketable skills, requiring employers to provide additional training to former inmates.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill has the potential to reduce the cost of providing a comprehensive transition course to inmates. However, the department indicates that it will probably not result in savings, but will allow the department to meet the amended statute's requirements within the existing budget.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
